

South Buxton and Talbot Street Pastoral Charges

24th Sunday after Pentecost – November 15th, 2020

Prelude: “Air on the G String” – Christie Coatsworth

Welcome & Announcements:

Welcome to our service today. I'd like to share about the book, “Memories of Merlin” – which is a collection of stories from the village of Merlin, may still be available from the Merlin Friendship Club. If you want a copy call George Darnley or Sue Drew. Cost is \$25 each.

This Saturday November 21st (in 6 days) is the day that we as citizens of Chatham Kent are invited to offer a gift to those less fortunate. For our area, St. Andrew's, St. Luke's and Talbot Street Churches will be drop off points from noon to 2 pm. Merlin will have a house to house front porch collection starting at noon. Please place your gift on your front porch by noon, and we will get it picked up. If Saturday does not work for you, the Merlin Friendship Club Foyer will be open for drop offs of your gifts, from 8:30 am to 7 pm, this week from Monday to Friday. We will make sure they get delivered to the Merlin Community Hall. On Saturday November 21st, you can drop off at the Merlin Community Hall from noon to 2 pm. At all drop off points, we ask you stay in the car, and volunteers will get your gift out of your trunk or side door. They will be masked and will use sanitizer to ensure everyone's safety. The intent for this drive is to stock the Christmas Baskets with food and toys, and excess food will be used at our local Food Banks.

We are also collecting socks and underwear for the homeless. You are welcome to put some with your gift on November 21st and we will ensure they get to The United Way. Thank you for your gifts.

On Wednesday November 11th at 11 am, we remembered our Veterans and those who fought for freedom for Canada. After a short service at the Cenotaph with masks and social distancing – we named those killed in battle. COVID restrictions cannot stop us from remembering and honouring those who gave it all.

St. Luke's is collecting donations for the Chatham Kent Children's Services to help them with Christmas for their clients. Donations will be matched up to \$300. You can donate online or send your donation to George Darnley. Last date to donate is Sunday November 29th – the First Sunday of Advent.

Continue to keep in touch with others and to share our websites; at southbuxton.ca, and talbotstreet.ca

Thank you to Christie Coatsworth for our music this morning. Thank you to Tracey Major for putting together the Power Point slides.

Lighting of the Christ Candle:

We light the candle as we share our service this morning. The flame of the Candle reminds us of the light of Christ that collects us as the faith community, “We are One in the Spirit”. Thanks be to God.

Call To Worship:

Eric: We lift our eyes to you, O God; we lift our spirits in worship.

People: **We look to you, seeking guidance and comfort.**

Eric: We look to you seeking healing and renewal.

People: **We look to you, seeking mercy and grace;**

Eric: for we have had our fill of struggles and stress.

People: **We have had more than our fill of worrying and wondering.**

Eric: To you, O God, we lift our eyes and spirits, with hope and confidence in your love.

People: **Be known to us as we worship and help us find rest.**

Hymn: VU 421 “Lead On, O Cloud of Presence”

- 1 Lead on, O cloud of Presence, the exodus is come.
 In wilderness and desert our tribe shall make its home.
 Our slavery left behind us, new hopes within us grow.
We seek the land of promise where milk and honey flow.
- 2 Lead on, O fiery Pillar, we follow yet with fears,
 but we shall come rejoicing though joy be born of tears.
We are not lost, though wandering,
for by your light we come,
and we are still God's people. The journey is our home.
- 3 Lead on, O God of freedom, and guide us on our way,
 and help us trust the promise through struggle and delay.
We pray our sons and daughters may journey to that land
where justice dwells with mercy, and love is law's demand.

Opening Prayer:

You have given us each many talents, Gracious Creator, and we give thanks to you for such generosity and kindness. You have given us, as a community, many opportunities to reflect your beauty, wisdom, and love, and for this, we give thanks. You have bestowed upon us opportunities to invest the gifts you have given us – to reach out in faithful joy and to share from our abundance. And you have called us together in worship and invite us to be accountable to you for our lives and our love. Be with us as we gather and help us to boldly proclaim the ways we have shared your love, through the gifts you have given us. Hear our songs, prayers, and silences as testimony of our stewardship. And bless us as we worship – increase our strength and courage through this time, we pray. Amen.

Scripture: Matthew 25: 14 - 30 (in Story Form)

Jesus continued talking with groups of people. He told them more stories about God's dream. The dream was about a community where everyone was loved, healthy, and happy. People would be treated well, everyone would eat and be filled, and the place where they lived would be beautiful. Some called it the kingdom of God, and some called it God's reign.

This community was so big and beautiful that it is hard to describe, so Jesus told stories to help the people imagine such a place. The stories also helped the people to imagine, wonder, and think deeply about how we should live into the world that God wants for all people.

This story was about a rich man who was talking with the people who worked for him.

Jesus said that there was once a man who was about to leave on a long journey. The man gathered together the people who worked for him and asked them to take care of his gold treasures. He gave one person five pieces of gold; he gave one person two pieces of gold; he gave one person one piece of gold.

The person who had five pieces decided to invest all of them. They earned five more pieces of gold; they had 10 in total!

The person who had received two pieces of gold also invested those pieces; they earned two more pieces of gold; they had four in total!

The person who was asked to care for one piece of gold was not sure what to do with it, and how to care for it. So this person dug a hole in the ground and hid the piece of gold.

One day, the rich man came back home. He gathered together the three people who worked for him and asked them what they did with the pieces of gold. The person who had received five pieces of gold explained that they had invested the money and made more – and gave the rich man ten pieces of gold in total. The rich man was very happy! He said, “Well done; you have been trustworthy in a few things. I will put you in charge of many things.”

In the same way, the person who had received two pieces of gold explained that they had invested the money and made more – and gave the rich man four pieces of gold in total. The rich man was very happy! He said, “Well done; you have been trustworthy in a few things. I will put you in charge of many things.”

Then the person who had received one piece of gold came forward and said, “I was scared! I did not want to lose your gold because I know that is important to you. I hid the gold so that it would be safe.” And the person gave the rich man back his one piece of gold.

But the rich man was not happy with this news. He said, “You are lazy! Why did you not invest the gold? Then I would have earned more.” The rich man took back the one gold and gave it to the person who had ten pieces of gold, so even more money could be earned for the landowner.

The people looked at each other. This was a hard story. Jesus had given them a lot to think about how they should live.

Message: “Investing in the Kingdom”

Today we hear the story about the talents. We have understood “a talent” to be a sum of money. What if we thought about “a talent” being our talent – that thing that we are good at? Today I am suggesting that we need to invest in our talents. In the 21st century, workers will have several

different jobs or careers during their working lifetime. We are told to get trained while you are working at one job, to get you more suited to your next job. The best part is that most companies offer the training, or are willing to pay for it. It becomes a win – win situation.

COVID has changed our working world for many of us. We “Zoom” instead of meeting in person – this includes church, training sessions, Conferences, even sales calls. We are told that for about 1/3 of our workforce, COVID will change the way they do things. For many of us it may be working from home. Others will find the job they had before COVID will no longer exist. They will have to invest in their talent to be able to do a new thing.

For many of us using “Zoom” – going from in person worship to some type of electronic worship – we quickly invested in our talents – or lack of electronic talents. Watching “Zoom” workshops or webinars, we learnt how to do a relatively effective Church Service, then improved from there. We quickly learnt that 20 minute messages on Zoom will not keep your audience connected. We learnt that having the standard four hymns is a bit too much. We learnt that just one person doing all the talking gets “old” quickly. We learnt that it is easy for folks to turn off the service, get up and go to the bathroom, or quit attending online.

Yet we have also learnt that folks like the opportunity to experience the service at their preferred time and place. We have learnt that when we do special services such as last week’s Remembrance Sunday, that other folks in the community get online to see our services. My oldest brother in Woodstock brings my 92 year old mother to his place Sunday morning to watch the service and have lunch together. Folks have joined from their cottage, or check in when they are camping in Algonquin Park. Folks who work on Sunday, check out the service later that week on their day off. Folks who get the written copy read it over and over a few times, perceiving new ideas each time they read the service. Others pass the service to their friends or neighbours. Others email their family in the United States for them to enjoy. Chances are I am still missing many more

innovations that we are realizing because we have invested into and grown our talents.

In today's story we hear about each person who invested their "Talent". The first invested and received double what he had invested - same with the second. But the third – dug a hole and buried his talent. He did not receive any return on his investment. When asked why, his response was he was scared of losing it, so he hid it where it would not be lost. Fear held this man back from investing in his talent.

COVID has created fear with many who fear they are way too old to invest in their talents. Or that their industry will finally come back as it once was. Reality seems to tell us that it may be a very long time before life returns to anything similar to normal – if ever. Certain industries such as hospitality, travel, sports and entertainment will be restricted much longer than many other industries. Yet some of those industries have invested in their talents, such as the sports industry playing in an empty arena. Many artists are doing out door concerts with limited fans (who many have paid big money for a ticket). Talk shows are projecting a digital audience where their audience is at home on their computer and represented on the show on one of 50 or more TV screens.

Jesus reminds us many times, "Do not be afraid. I am with you". The people who are hearing the words of Matthew have reason to be afraid – Jesus, their leader was executed on the cross. You could hardly say with any confidence, "Don't worry, Jesus is with us". Yet at some point, those people started to hear and understand Jesus' stories and realized that when they invest in their talents, they get results. Do not be like the man who was scared and buried his talent. If you do that - your talents are no good to you. Be like the first and second man – they each had different and even varied talents but they invested them to become better at what they do. They doubled their efforts.

Maybe the biggest message for us today is when we invest our talents of faith - our faith grows stronger, larger and more solid. In that investment we start to see Jesus in a different light. Yes, Jesus was executed on a

cross, but three days later Jesus was resurrected and continued to be, “the light of the world”. We miss that part if we bury ourselves in fear. Yet if we invest in our faith, we start to see the light and know the words Jesus shared, “I will be with you”, are so true. We can feel Jesus in our hearts and in our minds, leading us towards being the Church in whatever way we can in the world today. If we can be the Church then we share Christ’s light with the rest of our community.

Seeing our confidence and investment into our community can give them a sense of power to not let fear control their life, but let the light, light the path in front of them.

As with any investment - risk is involved, and success is never guaranteed. But playing it safe - is not a good option. Life may not always turn out as we hope and expect, but today we are called to take the risk – to invest in ourselves and our faith – to let our light shine into our community today. We are on the journey, with those gone before us, whom invested in their faith in the past, and with those we journey with today – to whom we invest in our faith today, preparing us for the future. “We are not alone”. God is always with us. Thanks be to God.

Hymn: VU 342 “You Servants of God”

- 1 You servants of God, your Saviour proclaim,
and publish abroad that wonderful name;
the name all victorious of Jesus extol,
whose kingdom is glorious and rules over all.
- 2 God rules from on high, almighty to save,
whose Word still is nigh, a presence we have.
The great congregation God's triumph shall sing,
ascribing salvation to Jesus our King.
- 3 Salvation to God, who sits on the throne!
Let all cry aloud, and honour the Son!
The praises of Jesus the angels proclaim,
bow down in deep reverence and worship the Lamb.
- 4 Then let us adore and give as is right,
all glory and power, all wisdom and might,
all honour and blessing with angels above,

and thanks never ceasing and infinite love.

Invitation to Share Our Gifts:

Eric: May God help us to invest in God's Kingdom here on earth. May we as the Church bring the light of Christ to our community, as we do God's work of righteousness. We as Christians are blessed in our relationship with God, with Jesus and with the Holy Spirit. Let us provide opportunities to bring God's Realm among us. Let us give in love.

Offertory: VU 541 "Praise God From Whom..."

Praise God from whom all blessings flow;
Praise Him, all creatures here below;
Praise Him above ye heavenly host;
Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost.

Offertory Prayer:

Here are our gifts – our treasure – returning to you what you have given to us. Bless and sanctify it, we pray, that it may multiply and increase in every way, through your love and promise. Amen.

Hymn: VU 400 "Lord, Listen To Your Children Praying"

Lord, listen to your children praying,
Lord, send your Spirit in this place;
Lord, listen to your children praying,
send us love, send us power, send us grace!

Pastoral Prayer & Lord's Prayer:

Eric: You have given us song!

People: Help us to invest in this gift and sing with abandon!

Eric: You have given us dance!

People: Help us to invest in this gift and move our bodies with joyful exuberance.

Eric: You have given us a natural world to care for.

People: Help us to invest in this gift and plant seeds, protect habitat, decrease our carbon footprint, and relish in the delights of your harvest.

Eric: You have given us responsibilities.

People: Help us to invest in these gifts by recognizing them not as burdens, but as blessings and opportunities to show you our love and devotion.

Eric: You have given us relationships.

People: Help us to invest in these gifts and discover how they offer us new dimensions to our souls. Help us to honour and cherish everyone.

Eric: You have given us community.

People: Help us invest in this gift and open the doors wide to any in need of our communion, of a safe harbour, and the nourishment of welcome.

Eric: You have given us your Holy Spirit.

People: Help us to invest in this gift and be a people of justice, peace, and renewal.

Eric: We thank you, Great God, for all the gifts of our lives.

People: May we invest them wisely and joyfully.

Eric: We pray in the name of Jesus, as we pray his prayer:

*Our Father, Who art in heaven,
Hallowed be thy name, Thy kingdom come,
Thy will be done, On earth as it is in heaven,
Give us this day our daily bread, And forgive us our trespasses,
As we forgive those who trespass against us,
And lead us not into temptation, But deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.*

Benediction:

Annette: Let us invest ourselves in helping to bring about God's realm on Earth. Let us go in peace, now and forever more.

Go Now in Peace:

Go now in peace, never be afraid.
God will go with you each hour of ev'ry day.
Go now in faith, steadfast, strong and true.
Know He will guide you in all you do.

Go now in love, and show you believe.
Reach out to others, so all the world can see.
God will be there, watching from above.
Go now in peace, in faith, and in love.
Amen, Amen, Amen.

Postlude: "Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring" – Christie Coatsworth

Prayers: - Please include these people in your prayers this week.

We have offered prayer for these people each Sunday morning just before the Zoom Service. It was suggested to share these names with the total group – as "In the Spirit We Are One".

In hospital:	Cleata	Karen
	Mike	Ian
	Ken	Jasmine
Accident:	Lyle	Recovering: Florence
	Carl	Angie
	Keith	Passing: Doug Sykes
	Zoe	Colton Srokosz
Cancer:	Wayne	Special: